**Evaluate bucket sanitation practices**If you bucket-feed milk to calves, examine these scenarios to see which one best fits how you “clean” the buckets. Do you:

A)    Squirt some water into the bucket and then empty it at the next feeding?

B)    Give calves housed in individual pens a clean pail upon arrival and that pail remains with the calf (unwashed) until she is weaned and moved to group housing?

C)    Rinse buckets after one feeding and then wash them thoroughly after the next feeding?

D)    Wash buckets between feedings for young calves only?

E)     Follow the recommended practice of rinse-wash-rinse-dry after each feeding?

As you can see, there are a wide range of practices when it comes to bucket sanitation.

Sam Leadley, of Attica (N.Y) Veterinary Associates, recommends that you evaluate your calf management and level of profitability to determine the level of feeding sanitation that is best for your operation.

“Careful observation of calf mortality, sickness and growth are the keystones of making an informed decision about how to manage this important sanitation issue,” Leadley says. “If you are meeting your goals for calf management (death rate, sickness rate, growth rate), then leave things alone. However, if one or more of these measures of profitability are unacceptable, then feeding sanitation may be one route to reduced expenses (death, treatment of illness, feed conversion) and greater returns (growth rates).”